(a) whether it is a fact that the Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of Bihar *vide* their letter No. 12360 dated 04.09.2008 has made the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India aware of 14 districts of the State being affected by flood in which Madhubani district has not been included;

(b) whether it is also a fact that dozens of villages which include Ramnagar, Nanpatti, Shuriyahe, Parsha, Mujiyashi *etc.* under Phulparas block, are badly affected by the river Bhutahi Balan in Madhubani district this year also like before; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Rural Development has received a letter No. 12360 dated 4.9.2008 from Principal Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Bihar, regarding advance release of 2nd instalment of Central funds to 14 very severely flood affected districts of Bihar. Accordingly, the Ministry of Rural Development has released 2nd advance instalment of Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) funds, amounting to Rs. 389.49 crore. The Madhubani district was not among the very severely affected districts for which advance release of 2nd installment under IAY had been requested by the State Government.

Expanding National Old Age Pension Scheme to BPL families

1835. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI DARA SINGH:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to expand "National Old Age Pension Scheme" so as to cover all families Below the Poverty Line; and

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the minimum amount of pension Government propose to give to BPL or contemplating to increase the amount of pension being paid to them today?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The eligibility criteria under "National Old Age Pension Scheme" has been modified to include all persons who are 65 years or higher and belonging to a household below the poverty line, according to the criteria prescribed by the Government of India. The Scheme has been renamed as 'Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme' (IGNOAPS) and launched on 19th November, 2007. Under IGNOAPS, Central Assistance of Rs. 200 per month per beneficiary is provided to eligible persons. Presently there is no proposal to increase the amount of pension.

Deficiency in rural sanitation scheme

1836. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Prime Minister has admitted the deficiency in rural sanitation scheme;

(b) if so, whether Prime Minister was delivering the inaugural address of the 3rd South Asian Conference on Sanitation organized by his Ministry;

(c) if so, the concrete measures and steps Government is now taking to remove the deficiency in rural sanitation scheme; and

(d) to what extent they have been removed and the latest progress in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) and (b) While inaugurating the 3rd South Asia Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN-III) on 18th November, 2008, the Prime Minister of India said the following regarding the rural sanitation programme:—

"In India we have worked hard to correct the neglect of the past in this vital area. In the past five years, the government has increased investment in rural sanitation by as much as six times and I compliment my colleague Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh for having brought a dedicated spirit to give guidance to this vital programme."

"The big change in the Indian effort on rural sanitation came when we began to use the energy of our local bodies for sanitation. An incentive-based "Nirmal Gram Puraskar" or Clean Village Award was crafted into our campaign for total sanitation. This has led to community leadership taking up the campaign to bring about total sanitation in our villages as their priority concern. Panchayats are competing with each other to win the Nirmal Gram Puraskar. This mobilization of the resources of the civil society is a very shining example of the initiatives that our Ministry of Rural Development has taken in recent years."

"...we need to address the issue of sustainability. I am told that 20% of the toilets built in our country are not functional because of a variety of factors, from poor construction to the lack of adequate maintenance. We need, therefore, to build local capacity in construction and maintenance of sanitation facilities."

(c) and (d) To build local capacity as pointed out by the Prime Minister, the Scheme Guidelines have included the establishment of Rural Sanitary Marts (RSM) and Production Centers. Rural Sanitary Marts are an outlet dealing with the materials, hardware and designs required for the construction of not only sanitary latrines but also other sanitary facilities, such as soakage and compost pits, vermi-composting, washing platforms, certified domestic water filters and other sanitation and hygiene accessories required for individuals, families and the environment in the rural areas. Production Centers are set up to produce cost effective affordable sanitary materials. The District Implementing agency is also required to identify key training institutions/Resource persons to train the RSM Managers, so that they are able to respond to local requirements with a band of trained masons and motivators. The training costs have been included as part of the Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

funding in each of the approved projects and are provided upto 15% of the total district project cost.

Upto November, 2008, Total Sanitation Campaign Programme (TSC) projects have been sanctioned in 590 rural districts of the country at a total outlay of Rs. 14,014 crore, with Rs. 1,672.94 crore for the component of IEC. Since 1999, over 4.91 crore Individual Household Latrines, 7.23 lakh school toilet units and 2.27 lakh Anganwadi toilets have been provided for rural areas under the TSC.

Steps for non-participants under NREGA

1837. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a section of persons having job cards for the works under NREGA are not participating in the works and are not interested also;

(b) whether Government is contemplating any step for those nonparticipants;

(c) whether Government would decide to increase the mandays for those who are regularly participating in the programme; and

(d) the average mandays per card holder during the year 2007-08 in different States and UTs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDRA SEKHAR SAHU): (a) NREGA is demand based. In order to get employment under NREGA, a job card holder needs to submit a written application for work. Despite having a job card, workers are free to take up any other employment available in their area of residence or elsewhere. Legal guarantee for 100 days of wage employment under NREGA is for doing un-skilled manual work on demand. Therefore, workers who are interested in doing manual work apply for employment under the Act.

(b) Various steps have been taken to generate awareness about NREGA. Gram Sabhas and one day orientation of all Sarpanches at the Block level have been held. Local vernacular newspapers, radio, TV, films and cultural forms are being used for the purpose. Leaflets and brochures in local language are being provided. NGOs and Self help Groups are being associated in the awareness generation and also for mobilizing the rural population.

(c) NREGA provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment to every rural household in a financial year for doing unskilled manual work on demand. In addition, the workers are free to avail any other employment opportunity available to them.

(d) Basic unit for providing employment under NREGA is a household State-wise average of mandays per household is given in the Statement. (*See* below). Rural areas of Union territories have been covered under NREGA with effect from 1.4.2008